

that the truth is something to be distorted and manipulated for partisan advantage. And, again, that is the worst possible message we can be sending to our children about the importance of personal morality and character and about the way our political process works.

The column goes on to say that Attorney General Lungren has been talking about morality for a long time. So have some of the rest of us. It reminds me of the old country song, "I was country when country wasn't cool." A lot of us were talking about morality and character and talking about stressing the need to talk more about character and virtue for a long time now. We were doing that not only because we have to be role models for our children as elected decision-makers, but because we think there is a tremendous yearning for spiritual values now in America, as this column suggests, that is unarticulated and unfulfilled. And, hence, here I am today in what is really sort of an "off" day for the Congress talking about these particular issues.

It just, I think, cannot be stressed enough that we should have a public debate on character, especially the character of politicians, and that those of us who are in elective office should welcome that debate and the scrutiny that comes with it.

Two weeks ago we celebrated President's Day, the day that is created to celebrate the birthdays of Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Two weeks ago today. It is a day when the country honors two great men who led this country at unique times. I certainly would not put myself in the same category as Washington and Lincoln, but it is their qualities of leadership and strength of character that I believe every person running for elective office should try to emulate.

First and foremost, both men were men of great integrity and fortitude. Secondly, both men were willing to do the right thing for their country regardless of the political consequences. If we think about that for a moment, perhaps like I do, my colleagues will realize that times have indeed changed. These were men, by the way, long before the advent of modern American politics where everything is polled and focus-grouped, and where we can have political operatives and handlers and advisors and everybody is out there spinning constantly. This was long, long before that. Both men, though, stood for what they believed was right. They stood for doing the right thing for their country, for their constituencies, regardless of consequences.

Washington said, "Let prejudices in local interest yield to reason. Let us look to our national character and to things beyond the present period." That is, I think, very timely advice for today. Washington said, "Let us look to our national character and to things beyond the present period."

Abraham Lincoln, in his last public address in April of 1865, said, "Impor-

tant principles may and must be inflexible." Both men believed in being patriotic citizens first and politicians second. It is called, very simply, principle over politics. Both men triumphed over adversity and numerous setbacks. The value of courage, persistence and perseverance has rarely been illustrated more convincingly than in the life story of these men, and both men recognized that their perseverance was a gift of God.

Both men realized, again, as I said earlier, that the truth matters and character counts. They understood the importance of morality in American life. They understood that our freedom, the foundation of this country, was built on our Judeo-Christian values, and that it would never be possible or desirable to separate those values from the official actions and policies of our government.

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George Washington said, in his Farewell Address, of all the dispositions and habits which leads to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who would subvert these great pillars of human happiness.

So, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor today to talk about building a better America for our children, about leading the country to a new level of freedom and opportunity for every citizen, about repairing and rebuilding the moral fabric of America, and about my concern for the lessons we teach our children, the message that we send our children if, in fact, we really do care for our children when we begin to become very subjective, very relative about the truth and about morality in American life.

Washington and Lincoln again reminded us that there is no substitute for character and morality in elective office, and there is no shortcut for the truth. Today, 2 weeks after the President's Day holiday to celebrate their birthdays, I thought it would be a good idea to come to the floor and remind my colleagues that we can learn from the lessons of Washington and Lincoln, that we can, by following their example, do the right thing and put principle over politics.

#### 1998 TRADE POLICY AGENDA AND 1997 ANNUAL REPORT ON TRADE AGREEMENTS PROGRAM—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19

U.S.C. 2213), I transmit herewith the 1998 Trade Policy Agenda and 1997 Annual Report on the Trade Agreements Program.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 28, 1998.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. RIGGS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. RIGGS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BEREUTER, for 5 minutes, on March 4.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, on March 4.

#### EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. RIGGS) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. MCINTOSH.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

Mr. HAMILTON.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

Mr. BARCIA.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. RIGGS) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. OXLEY.

Mr. BERMAN.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until Tuesday, March 3, 1998, at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour debates.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XXIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

7619. A letter from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Hazelnuts Grown in Oregon and Washington; Reduced Assessment Rate [Docket No. FV97-982-1 FIR] received February 27, 1998, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7620. A letter from the Administrator, Marketing and Regulatory Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Onions Grown in